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GERMAN PLACEMENT POLICY.

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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN POLICY ON PLACEMENT IN COLLEGE GERMAN COURSES IS DISCUSSED WITH RELATION TO ARTICULATION BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE WORK. PROFICIENCY TESTING AND AWARDING OF COLLEGE CREDIT FOR HIGH SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES ARE OUTLINED BRIEFLY. DESCRIPTIONS OF ELEMENTARY COLLEGE GERMAN COURSES ARE INCLUDED. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN "THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURIER," NUMBER 39, JANUARY 1968, PAGES 9-12. (AF)

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GERMAN PLACEMENT POLICY

Articulation between high school and college foreign language programs has long been a major concern of the University of Michigan's various foreign language departments. The moving force behind this concern has often been the high school language teacher, urging persistently that students be given the kind of training in college for which they have been prepared in high school. There are at least two factors, however, that have led to an improvement in the continuity between high school and college programs. One is the gradual adoption, by both high schools and colleges, of a common approach to the teaching of foreign languages. The other is the use of standardized tests for the purpose of placing incoming college freshmen into courses in which their chances of success are good and in which they will feel reasonably challenged.

When a student who has had some training in German in high school wishes to enroll in one of our German courses, we evaluate his proficiency by means of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) German reading and listening tests. If he scores 600 or higher on both tests, he is considered proficient enough to have satisfied the foreign language requirement of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Although he need not take any further foreign language courses as part of his undergraduate program, he may enroll in one of our junior-level courses. If his score is lower than 600 on either or both tests, the student is placed into one of our intermediate or elementary courses.

A scale of scores for placement into the various courses was established some time ago, and appears in FLC, No. 37 (December, 1966), p.11. Since then the minimum scores for placement into German 231 have been lowered to 425 (both tests). We have also allowed a few students to elect German 102, without first having had our 101 course. This practice had been avoided earlier because of

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the obvicus disadvantage to the student; since we use the same text for both courses, a student beginning with German 102 would have to begin in the middle of the book, and compete with students who have virtually memorized the first half of it. Most of these students scored above 425 on one test, and slightly below 425 on the other, i.e., they would have placed into 231 if one of their scores had been a few points higher. If we find that such students can do satisfactory work in 102, then we will establish a score range for placement into that course.

The following table shows how many students placed into the various levels in the fall term of 1967, as compared to 1966:

Course	Number of Students Placed - 1967		Number of Students Placed - 1966	
101	194	(36%)	221	(52%)
231	179	(34%)	100	(24%)
232	94	(18%)	57	(13%)
Met Req.	62	(12%)	48	(11%)

Not all of these students actually enrolled in German courses, however. In the fourth week of classes, 114 CEEB students were enrolled in German 101, 12 were enrolled in 102 (under the arrangement described above), 127 were in 231, and 64 were in 232.

The third innovation to be reported here is the adoption by the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures of a more stringent policy with regard to the granting of college credit for elementary and intermediate courses. Credit will no longer be given for courses that are below what we consider to be reasonable levels of competence, given a certain number of years of high school German. Specifically, a student who had two years of German in high school will not be given college credit for our German 101 course, even though he may place into 101 on the basis of his CEEB scores; two years of German in high school ought to prepare him for a more sophisticated level of endeavor than that required by our beginner's course. Similarly, a student with three years of high school German will not receive college credit for anything lower than 232. It is hoped that this policy will encourage students to achieve scores on the CEEB tests that reflect more accurately their true ability in German. To put in negatively, we wish to discourage students from deliberately scoring low in order to place into "easy" courses.

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The University of Michigan

DESCRIPTION OF ELEMENTARY GERMAN COURSES

I. General Course Objectives

German 101 and 102 are designed to lead to proficiency in four areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These courses serve as prerequisites for German 231, in that they establish the foundation necessary for intermediate work. The sequence beginning with German 101 and terminating with 232 will satisfy the fourth-semester proficiency requirement in German. Credit toward graduation will be given in elementary German only if both elementary courses are satisfactorily completed.

II. Subject Matter Outline

Proficiency in the four skills mentioned above requires control of the sounds of German, mastery of the grammatical structures of German, and the ability to use and understand many German words and idioms. The early weeks of German 101 are devoted primarily to the first of these. At the same time, however, simple grammatical structures are introduced. Eventually, as control of German pronunciation is achieved, emphasis shifts to the learning and manipulation of sentence patterns and the building of active vocabulary.

Reading is introduced slowly, but by the end of German 102 the student will have read several long passages of German prose, of a mature and moderately complex level. The student learns to write German through a series of carefully controlled steps, beginning with with simple copying and dictation, but eventually his own.

III. Preparation For The Course

German 101 is the prerequisite for German 102. There is no prerequisite for 101. Students who have had previous training in German must take a placement test before enrolling in any German course.

IV. Methods of Instruction

German 101 and 102 classes are conducted primarily as drill sessions. The teacher usually introduces new material orally in class, which the students practice in the language laboratory with the aid of taped exercises, and at home with the text. The goal here is complete mastery of a number of sentence patterns and grammatical features. After having practiced the new material, and studied the grammatical principles on which it is based, the student's control of it is checked and/or improved in the classroom.

Reading and writing receive increased attention in German 102. Reading selections are introduced in class, assigned for home study,

and subsequently checked by the teacher. Writing assignments are at first rigidly controlled, but freer reign is given toward the end of 102.

Quizzes are given approximately every two weeks. Students must write a one-hour mid-term examination, and a two-hour final examination. They are also tested from time to time on speaking ability and pronunciation.

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